

doing business under the firm name of Sutton, Ruckman & Company, and built the largest old time tannery that was in the county at that time. At this tannery they turned out several hundred finished sides of leather that they used in making shoes and harness they specialized in heavy logging harness as the lumber business was at high tide at this time, some of these harness are still in use by farmers around Greenbank as they were the best of harness made from the best of leather.

This tannery was on the S.J Sutton farm on North Fork who settled here about 1870 and was part of the Godlip Hartman tract granted to him in 1804 for a sugar camp this Sutton homestead is now owned by the heirs of the late F.C Sutton.

An up to date and modern tannery is now operated by Kerth Snyder on a branch of Duncans Run he buys raw green hides and after they are tanned sells part of the leather but a greater part is used by him in harness and repair work however he does lots of custom work tanning for half of the leather the farmer using his part for repair work to his harness and any other use that can be found for leather on the farm as the leather tanned by Benton Smith at Millpoint and Kerth Snyder at Greenbank has more life and will outwear most leather that is tanned by the quick process and shipped in to the county the main trouble is getting hides that have been properly skinned and handled.

Along with this tanning comes the sheep pelt which when properly han-



...ed and finished makes a beautiful rug or chair back and cushion or for the car seat Benton Smith specializes in tanned Sheep hides these he sells to the tourist trade from this state and many others from coast to coast also Deer and Bear hides tanned with the hair on are bought by the traveling motorist as Benton runs a filling station along with his tannery and his tanning has attracted the tourist ~~XXXX~~ passing through W.Va. and Pocahontas County and in this way he has a market for his products as he not only sells leather but makes fancy belts that are bought by the traveling public.

Benton Smith is one of the first enrolled members in the Associated Craftsmen of W.Va. a newly organized guild of native craftsmen whose handwork has character and integrity, the association hopes to provide better hides and to create a better outlet for his products.

The modern tannery or tan yard plays a very important part in the rural communitys of Pocahontas County as the farmer can bring in his cow and sheep hides and in less than a year has finished leather to repair his harness do the work himself thereby saving a considerable sum and keeps the money at home and this helps home industry in which tanning is an important one. Thus the passing of the crude outdoor tan yard to the more modern ones of today.

Information. Pocahontas Times issue Oct. 31/40

R. W. Brown. Arbovale. W. Va.

Benton Smith. Millpoint. W. Va.



March 5, 1940

-1-

Chapter 4- Section 4 - Part a.

Tanning was quite an industry from the time of the first pioneer. Great skill was attained by the pioneer in curing the skins so as to make them soft and pliable, that they might be used in making different items of clothing, such as pants, caps, moccasins, and many other things.

The first tannery or tan yord operated by the people of the Greenbank Community was on land in the possession of Jacob Rambaugh, which was prior to 1800. The old tanner's name was Taber. He was a hatter by trade - made fur caps, moccasins, and buck skin pants. His tanning vats were large troughs, and a certain kind of bark, roots and herbs were used in dressing the hides, which accounts for his locating so far in the mountains.

The first tannery or old time tan yard of any consequence where first class upper and sole leather was manufactured was owned and operated by Charles P. Brown, who purchased the James Townsend patent of eighty-eight acres from James B. Campbell in the year of 1850, and erected his tannery that year. He kept the tannery in operation about six years when he sold out and moved across on North York where he located another tannery. This was at the east end of the Solomon Conrad lands. This tannery was kept running until about 1870, when he quit the tanner's trade and followed the stone mason's trade, for the rest of his life. He built foundations and stone chimneys all over the community.

about the year 1889, S. J. Sutton, F. C. Sutton,



and O. W. Ruckman formed a partnership under the name Sutton, Ruckman and Company, and erected the largest old time tannery in the County. At this tannery several hundred hides would be tanned dressed and finished into first class harness and upper leather each year for a period of about twenty-five years. In connection with the tannery, they made shoes and heavy logging harness for the lumber companies. This tannery was on the lands of S. J. Sutton.